

News Advisory

From the Rhode Island Judiciary



Supreme Court rides circuit to Tolman High

April 4, 2012: The Rhode Island Supreme Court will again practice the centuries-old tradition of “riding the circuit” when it hears oral arguments at William E. Tolman High School in Pawtucket on Wednesday, April 11.

“We are delighted to have Tolman High School as the venue for this session of the Supreme Court,” said Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell. “This is a wonderful opportunity to take the work of the Supreme Court to communities outside Providence so students and others can see firsthand how their justice system works.”

In the days before the automobile, courts would travel throughout their jurisdictions to hear arguments. This practice, called riding the circuit, was eventually dropped as transportation methods made it easier for litigants to travel. In the last 10 years, the Supreme Court has revived this practice as a way to open up the judicial process. Now, twice a year, the Supreme Court literally moves its entire operation to a local community and invites students and members of the community to see the process firsthand. The court last traveled in November 2011 to North Providence High School.

Court will begin at 9:15 a.m. in the auditorium at Tolman High School, 150 Exchange St., Pawtucket. The auditorium is on the side of Tolman closest to Exchange Street. Street parking is available. The court session is open to the public. Those wishing to observe should arrive by 9 a.m.

While at Tolman, the justices will hear arguments in three cases: a defendant’s appeal of a finding that he violated his probation; a former police officer’s appeal of convictions on several felony charges; and a defendant’s appeal from judgments of conviction on robbery and assault charges, as well as a finding of a probation violation.

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